

Master-Thesis
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Auditory Scenography in Music composition and production

A case study - composing and mixing the music of
Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG and his collective YNFB in Ambisonics and mixed
format (Ambisonic and Dolby Atmos)

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Abstract

Music production (especially music composition and arranging) is always evolved with technology. As nowadays people could easily listen to music in spatial audio format with the aid of portable mobile gadgets such as smartphones and headphones, The underlying question of this paper is how artist - Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG, could make use of this technology and create a new form of music by involving space domain in the composition with the band - YNFB. This research discusses the development of a new form of music, 3D mix aesthetics of higher order ambisonics, monophonic, and stereophonic materials, while at the same time attempts to try out new workflows of spatial music production. A live improvisation session was recorded in HAW - Tonlabor. The tracks of this session and field recording in mono, stereo and ambisonic format were mixed at home of the artist, exploring a down-to-earth workflows and tools of spatial music production. A subsequent interview was carried out in order to investigate whether the artist could create an auditory cinematic experience for the listeners and how the spatial elements are contributing to the music.

Die Musikproduktion (insbesondere Musikkomposition und -arrangement) entwickelt sich stets mit der Technologie weiter. Da die Menschen heutzutage mit Hilfe von tragbaren mobilen Geräten wie Smartphones und Kopfhörern problemlos Musik in einem räumlichen Audioformat hören können, stellt sich die Frage, wie der Künstler Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG diese Technologie nutzen und eine neue Form von Musik schaffen kann, indem er den Raum in die Komposition mit der Band YNFB einbezieht. Diese Forschung diskutiert die Entwicklung einer neuen Form von Musik, einer 3D-Mix-Ästhetik von Ambisonics höherer Ordnung, monophonem und stereophonem Material, während gleichzeitig versucht wird, neue Arbeitsabläufe der räumlichen Musikproduktion zu erproben. Eine Live-Improvisations-Session wurde im HAW-Tonlabor aufgenommen. Die Spuren dieser Session und die Feldaufnahmen im Mono-, Stereo- und Ambisonic-Format wurden bei der Künstlerin zu Hause abgemischt, um bodenständige Arbeitsabläufe und Werkzeuge der räumlichen Musikproduktion zu erproben. In einem anschließenden Interview wurde untersucht, ob der Künstler ein auditives Kinoerlebnis für die Zuhörer schaffen kann und wie die räumlichen Elemente zur Musik beitragen.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation

The pandemic, my home country Hong Kong, my current location in Germany, self-identity, the cyber attack on HAW, and the exploration of new music and spatial audio are terms that have become integral to my daily life since commencing my Master's studies. Throughout the first semester, I found myself consistently grappling with questions such as "Why should we manipulate the positions of the sound when we already have the capability to do so?" and "Which music genres benefit from or require a spatial mix?" Furthermore, considering that spatial audio technologies like Ambisonics and Binaural technology have existed since the 1960s and 1980s respectively, spanning a significant 42-year time frame, I have been contemplating how these technologies could be effectively applied to music composition and production.

As I pondered over these questions and engaged in various projects amidst the ongoing pandemic, I recognised the importance of seeking answers through practical application. I realised that in order to develop a comprehensive understanding, there is a pressing need to embark on the creation of a composition that would necessitate the amalgamation of my knowledge in areas such as ambisonics, spatial audio production tools like Dolby Atmos, 3D plug-ins, music theory, and mixing techniques. Moreover, I aimed to incorporate different elements such as musical styles, the musical ideas of my collective - YNFB, field recordings, and sound effects. Furthermore, the exploration of the creative and aesthetic possibilities presented by an innovative scenographic production approach (Goerne, T., & Karadoğan, C. 2019) in the case study of Auditory Scenography in Music Production: Case Study Mixing Classical Turkish Music, led by Thomas Goerne and Can Karadoğan, has greatly influenced me. Consequently, this has motivated me to delve into alternative creative and aesthetic approaches to spatial music composition and production.

Most significantly, I firmly believe that this case study is actively shaping the art of the future in the present moment. I am driven by a profound curiosity and passion, and my endeavours are primarily motivated by personal satisfaction. Additionally, the results of the forthcoming listening tests (which will be elaborated upon in the subsequent chapters) related to this project have proven beneficial in shaping my

future artworks. They will provide valuable insights regarding the effective integration of spatial elements in my music, enabling the creation of an immersive auditory cinematic experience for the audience. Furthermore, these findings will contribute significantly to my understanding of how spatial elements substantially enhance my music.

1.2 Spatial music and audio technology

Spatial Music and audio technology could never be separated. In the 1950s, pioneering composers such as Pierre Schaeffer, Stockhausen introduced the concept of live multichannel reproduction. Then in 1972, John Chowning created the illusion of a continuous 360-degree quadraphonic spatialisation in his composition Turenas. We considered this is the earliest form of spatial music (i.e Sonic art and electro-acoustic music) which refers to a genre of musical composition and performance that emphasises the arrangement and motion of sound elements within physical or virtual spaces. It involves purposefully manipulating the spatial distribution of sounds, including their positioning, path, and distance, to create an engrossing auditory encounter.

Nowadays, as technology has taken a more significant leap forward, we now have 3D audio technology, a wide variety of production and distribution formats which enable us to adopt a more modern approach to music composition and production. Before talking about how to apply these technology as a tool to music composition and production, we have to define what is 3D audio.

“3D audio can loosely be defined as a form of surround listening that extends beyond the horizontal sound field - including an impression of height. As an academic field, 3D audio is diverse. Many people will relate to it in the context of Dolby Atmos in a contemporary cinema, yet the concept has been exploited in performance since the Renaissance, and it evolved through the latter 20th century as an augmentation of composition, often via the Acousmatic school. A seminal moment was the development of Ambisonics by Michael Gerzon in the 1970s, and this format has recently experienced a great surge in research interest and applications, often through its deployment in the zeitgeist that is the (re-)emergence of virtual reality (VR).” (Paterson, J., & Lee, H. 2022) With the aforementioned definition of 3D audio and how we understand 3D audio in an

academic field, we knew that 3D audio could be referred production or distribution format for example Dolby Atmos and ambisonic. Moreover, we understand that this approach is not limited to the horizontal sound field, but also extends to the vertical sound field for music composition and production. At the same time, nowadays listeners could listen to spatial music, for example by using their IOS device and with AirPods Pro. According to Oliver Schusser, Apple/s vice president of Apple Music and Beats, says that half of Apple Music Users are listening in Spatial Audio during an interview with Billboard.

"We now have more than half of our worldwide Apple Music subscriber base listening in spatial audio and that number is actually growing really, really fast," says Schusser. "We would like the numbers to be higher, but they are definitely exceeding our expectations." (Expert, P. 2022)

It seems that it will be a trend for more and more listeners to listen to spatial music through Apple Music (one of the major streaming platforms) with their iOS devices and earphones. The question then arises: How could the artists create our artwork in the form of music and sonic art by applying this advanced technology, use it as an artistic tool and distribute the artworks to the listeners?

1.3 Production format

Ambisonics/HOA, Binaural technology and Dolby atmos

Higher order ambisonic

Higher Order Ambisonics (HOA) is a spatial audio technique employed for the capture, encoding, and reproduction of sound within a three-dimensional space. It serves as an expansion of Ambisonics, a format designed to represent and manipulate audio using a spherical coordinate system.

HOA surpasses the fundamental first-order Ambisonics (FOA) by employing higher orders of spherical harmonics to capture more intricate spatial information. Its primary objective is to deliver a more precise and immersive sound reproduction, encompassing not only sound intensity and direction but also spatial characteristics such as distance, elevation, and width of sound sources.

HOA can be applied in various domains, including virtual reality, gaming, film production, and music composition. It provides a flexible and adaptable approach to spatial audio, enabling the creation of lifelike and dynamic soundscapes that greatly enhance the overall listening experience. In this particular case study, HOA recording will be utilised as one of the musical elements, and the subsequent chapter will provide a detailed explanation of its implementation.

Binaural technology

Binaural technology is a type of audio technology that utilises two microphones to create a three-dimensional sound experience for the listener. This technology is designed to mimic the way humans naturally hear sound, which is by processing different sound waves from each ear and then combining them to create a single sound image in the brain.

For example, it works by using two microphones that are placed in the ears or in a head-shaped structure, called a dummy head. Each microphone records sound from a slightly different angle and distance, simulating the way that sound waves reach the ears in real life. The two separate recordings are then mixed together to create a stereo sound that gives the impression of a 360-degree sound experience. Binaural technology is often used in applications such as virtual reality, video games, and music production. It can create a highly immersive and realistic sound experience that makes the listener feel as if they are actually present in the environment being depicted. It can also be used to create a sense of spatialisation in music, making it appear as if different instruments or sounds are coming from different locations around the listener.

Dolby Atmos

Dolby Atmos is a hybrid surround sound format which combines channel-based audio (**Atmos beds**) with object-based audio (**Atmos objects**). It is designed to provide a more immersive and realistic audio experience by allowing sound to be positioned and moved in three-dimensional space, including above and below the listener. Sound engineers and producers can precisely position and move individual sound elements, such as music, dialogue, or special effects, in a way that creates a more lifelike and immersive sound experience. Besides, many music streaming services now offer Dolby Atmos support for select tracks and albums for example

apple music and Amazon Prime video , allowing listeners to experience their favourite music in a new and immersive way.

With these production formats and 3D audio technology, music producers nowadays are able to monitor their spatial mix in ambisonic and Dolby atmos domain by binauralisation. It could be achieved by using binaural decoder audio plug-in in their DAW (Digital audio workstation) and monitoring the mix through their headphones. Besides, consumers could listen to music in spatial audio format with custom HRTF (Head Related Transfer Function). For instance, they could listen to it through their IOS devices, such as AirPods Pro or any other devices which support Dolby Atmos.

In order to achieve the goal of this case study, mono, stereo and ambisonic recording will be utilised in the composition. For the mixing and mastering session, binaural decoding plays an important role. Besides, dolby atmos will be the distribution format for the composition, so that the listeners are able to listen to the composition with their device at home or anywhere without contain of time and physical space. The next chapter will offer a detailed explanation of the rationale and concept behind my utilisation of these production and distribution formats.

2 Objective, idea and concept

2.1 Auditory Scenography - Creating an aural architectures

First and foremost, I aim to shape the listener's experience like “playing the movie in their head and interacting with their own life experience” and create emotional and narrative impact to the listeners through the composition, the arrangement of sound, mixing techniques and different audio formats. Therefore, auditory scenography regards literally to the aural architecture which I aim to create.

“Creating a spatial fantasy is the artistic activity of designing musical spatiality”
(Blessner, B., & Salter, L. R. 2009)

My assumption/fantasy lies on the enormous magical power of auditory scenography. With no hesitation would I believe that the choice of audio format, spatial distribution, emphasis on different layers (mixing techniques) of the sound can create different experiences of the architectural spaces and put influence on the listener's perception. The metaphor is like ambisonic is the most enveloped format to act as the outermost layer, whereas mono and stereo are relatively less enveloped than the ambisonic format, so they could be the inner layers.

“From the perspective of a composer, who is manipulating many musical dimensions unrelated to space, spatial acoustics is just one of the ways to achieve a given musical goal. Even if inflexible, space is still part of the musical language.”
Blessner, B., & Salter, L. R. (2009)

Instead of just manipulating musical dimensions other than space, layers of space is the main focus, and the aural architecture I want to create. To achieve this, I have created my own aural architecture which contains basically 3 layers /3 different spaces as my musical language, namely The Observer, Story telling and Music. The ambisonic recording serves as the “Observer” layer. The mono and stereo field recording contains speech and languages for the story telling layer, and music is the integration layer for unifying all the sound elements. They all emerge with the purpose of creating emotional and narrative impact. Field recording which contains speech and languages could shape listeners’ understanding and emotional response to architectural spaces. This could thus be utilised in the composition. Additionally, the music layer acts as a unifying force in architectural spaces in order to create coherence, enhance the listener's experience, and

integrate various elements within this space. Also, in order to neglect the ambience/interference of the reality we live in and assist listeners to focus only on the aural architecture I created and provide the most immersive experience with the listeners, it is crucial to wear headphones when listening to the composition.

2.2 “Down to earth” workflow

Spatial audio tools and plug-ins serve as artistic instruments for composers and sound artists to manifest their creative vision. In my research, I aim to explore the impact of workflow, tools (such as plug-ins), monitor configurations, and formats on a creative process. Additionally, I am interested in experimenting with a "Down to earth" and "Work from home" approach to spatial music production. This approach is motivated by the need to adapt to the prevailing circumstances of our time, encompassing challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the cyber attack on HAW, and the constraints imposed by a limited budget. Through this investigation, I seek to uncover insights into the ways in which the aforementioned factors influence and shape the creative process in the future spatial music production.

2.3 Aesthetic Challenges

The objective is to strike a balance between experimentation and accessibility by incorporating tonal and easy listening elements into the composition. This approach stems from our intention to engage a wider audience and enable them to experience the immersive audio technology. However, it is important to acknowledge that the current state of Binaural technology is not advanced enough to fully capture and convey the entirety of the composition's conceptual framework. Additionally, the constraints of time and space pose limitations in achieving a flawless composition and mix, considering the complexity and scope of the project from my perspective.

3 The composition, creative and production process

Composition methods

“Collective composition describes the composition methods of musicians/composer, ways in which problems are resolved, the new awareness and understanding they have acquired and the results of work created out of a re-evaluation of individual ways of operating, that seeks to bring together and strengthen the common ground between them.” (Cipriani, A., & Ciardi, F. 2004) Part of the composition is finished by collective composition (Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG and his band YNFB@Hamburg, Germany). There are four artists in this group:

Alexander von Oppenbach (Germany) - Synthesizer

Jan Wegmann (Germany) - Electronics and clarinet

Victor Ernesto Gutierrez Cuiza (Chile) - Electronics and Voice

Benjamin Yat-Fung Wong (Hong Kong) - Electric guitar, soundscapes, sound effects; Recording, mixing and mastering engineer

Alexander - Supporting drummer

The music collective has many performances which were held at diverse venues and events. Notable examples include MS Stubnitz, Thalia Theatre, 48 Stunden Wilhelmsburg, live improvisation sessions, and spatialisation concerts like "Kontaktlos Kontakt" at HAW Tonlabor. Drawing from their extensive experience and enriched by their diverse cultural and musical backgrounds, the musicians collaborate in unison to pursue a novel style of composition rooted in the core artistic vision of Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG. The core artistic visions of the composition are firstly Improvisation under a framework which is created by Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG and YNFB. (More details will be provided in the next session of creative and production process.) Secondly, cinematic flow with soundscape/sound design by Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG. The main structure is A. Protest in Hong Kong, B. Immigration, C. Land of Promise.

Creative and production process

Step 1 Basic concept and structure

Step 2 Composition through improvisation according to the instruction

Step 3 Set-up

Step 4 Rehearsal x 3

Step 5. Live recording (2 takes)

Step 6 Choose 1 take

Step 7 Create a stereo mix

Step 8 Field recording by using 2nd order Ambisonic microphone in Hong Kong

Step 9 Create two mixes in ambisonic and Dolby Atmos respectively through binaural monitoring at home (Hamburg, Germany)

Step 1 Concept and structure

The music begins with a heavy and intense scene, depicting a protest and demonstration in Wanchai, Hong Kong. The location is filled with numerous protesters and domestic helpers. (A)

Gradually, the scene shifts to an airport farewell scene. This transition is a result of the protest and the establishment of the new extradition law in 2019. The bill, proposed by the Hong Kong government in February 2019, aimed to create a mechanism for extraditing fugitives to not only Taiwan but also mainland China and Macau. This inclusion of mainland China and Macau in the extradition law led to a loss of trust in the government, as it signaled a breakdown of the original legal system. As a result, many Hong Kong citizens decided to immigrate to other countries, such as the UK, Canada, or the USA. (A1)

Pedestrian A: "Actually, there are so many memories in Wanchai." (Accidentally recorded)

The scene then shifts back to the protest scenery. However, in this context, it does not mean that the characters run back and join the protest again. Instead, it represents the characters running away from home with memories. After their departure, they arrive in a new land or place filled with uncertainty, insecurity, discrimination, anxiety, ambiguity, and more. (B)

Pedestrian B: "好難捱架..." (Accidentally recorded, and it could be related to the original idea of how difficult it is to be a new immigrant in a foreign country.)

Towards the end of the story, a Land with Promise is discovered. This idea is inspired by Genesis 17, where God affirms his covenant with Abraham and his offspring, promising to be their God and granting them the land of Canaan as a

perpetual possession. In my interpretation, the Land with Promise represents a place of protection. (C)

Step 2 Composition through improvisation according to the instruction

The collective YNFB meets for 2 times, and start to figure out the instrumentation, and the content according to the concept of the music. Technically, Benjamin Yat-Fung WONG is responsible for the structure and timing with a timer. While the musicians were rehearsing.

Instruction:

A simple motif, harmonise according to the concept.

Ambiguous modality in part B and transition to part C.

Part C, a forest, and a land.

Step 3,4,5,6,7 Source recording and stereo mix production (Video in the digital attachment)

All the instruments were recorded in HAW on 7th June 2022. The recording system is basically a live concert recording set-up.

For guitar, synthesiser, electronics, clarinet to interface are connected to the Dante I/O. For drums, the whole signal drum set were captured by using various microphones and all the signals go to the Dante I/O respectively, and recorded by using Reaper.

Then, for stereo mix, it's basically finished in Ableton live with Sennheiser HD650, Sony MDR 7506 and Eve audio SC203.



Step 8 Field recording by using 2nd order Ambisonic microphone in Hong Kong

Three locations are chosen as an **Observer** layers. **Location 1 Hong Kong Shatin Kwong Yuen Estate** is where I grew up and I spent most of my childhood here. **Location 2: Hong Kong Johnston Road, in front of the Methodist Church, HK** is where the protest was happened before. **Location 3: Seaside, Hong Kong Tai Kok Tsui** is where I met my boss (My first job as sound engineer) during almost the end of my HongKong trip on January 2022.

Recording equipments and set-up:

- Core sound Octomic
- Zoom F8n
- Mic stand and the other accessories

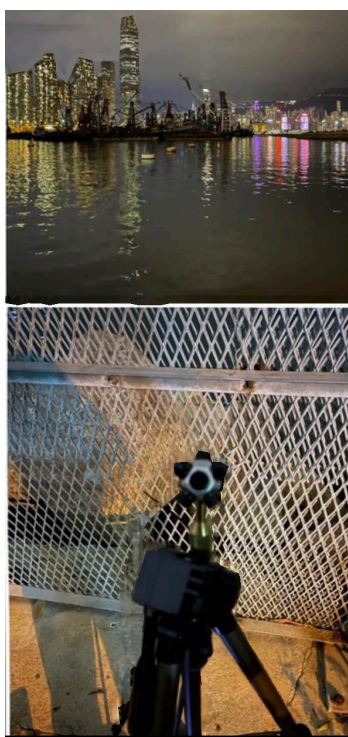
Location 1



Location 2



Location 3



Step 9 Create a mix in ambisonic, Dolby Atmos domain through binaural monitoring

Before mix all the tracks in different production formats, all the field recording are being edited, and processed for example de-noise by Izotopes RX series.

9.1 Create a mix in ambisonic domain for testing the outcome and try the workflow

During the production process, I've tried to mix the composition in the ambisonic domain in order to investigate whether can I get a better outcome with this version. I created this mix mainly by using the IEM plug-in suite.

9.2 Mixed format which includes mono, stereo and ambisonic recording and dolby atmos as distribution format

Digital audio work station:
Reaper

Spatial audio tools:

IEM suite

VVOctoEncode (1.0.3)

SPARTA AmbiDEC and AmbiENC

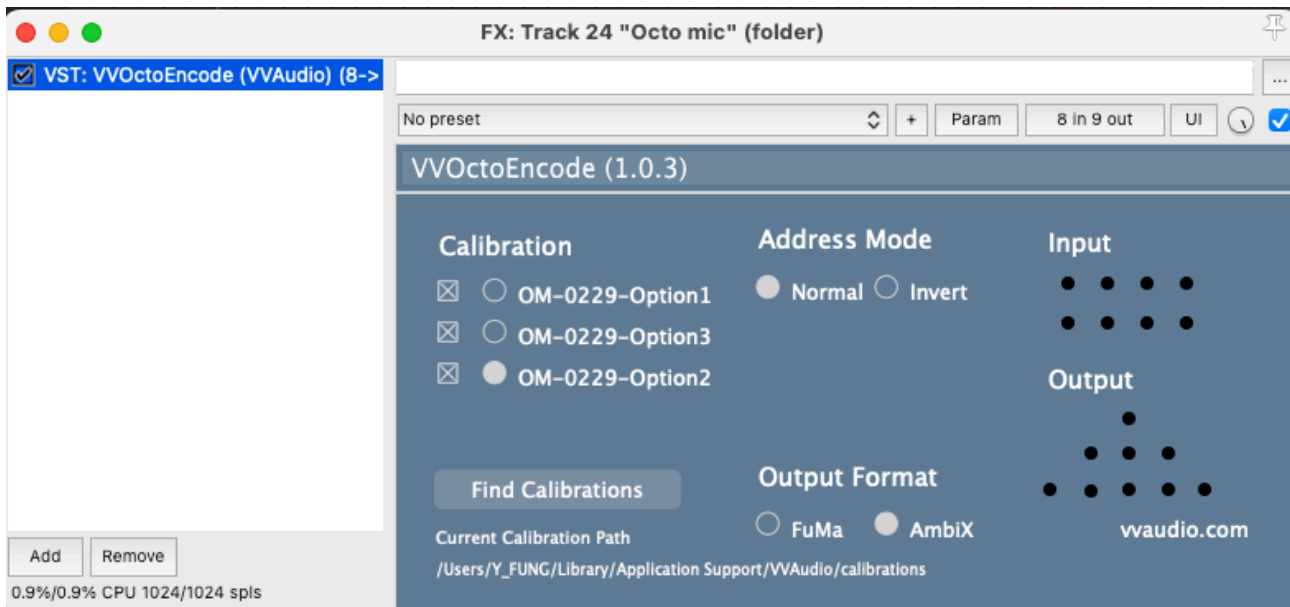
Audio Brewer, ab-Vortex (Space design plug-in)

Dolby Atmos production suite (Dolby LTC Generator, Dolby Atmos Binaural Setting and Dolby Atmos music panner and Dolby Atmos Renderer)

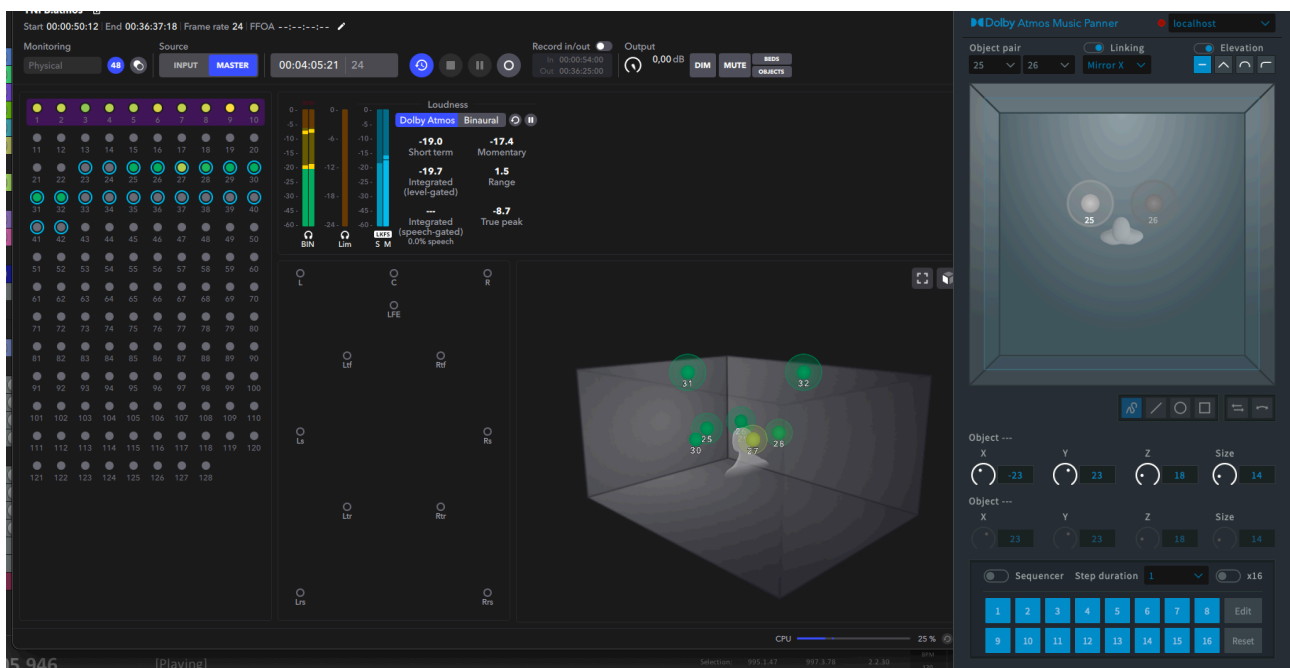
Cockos ReaSurroundPan

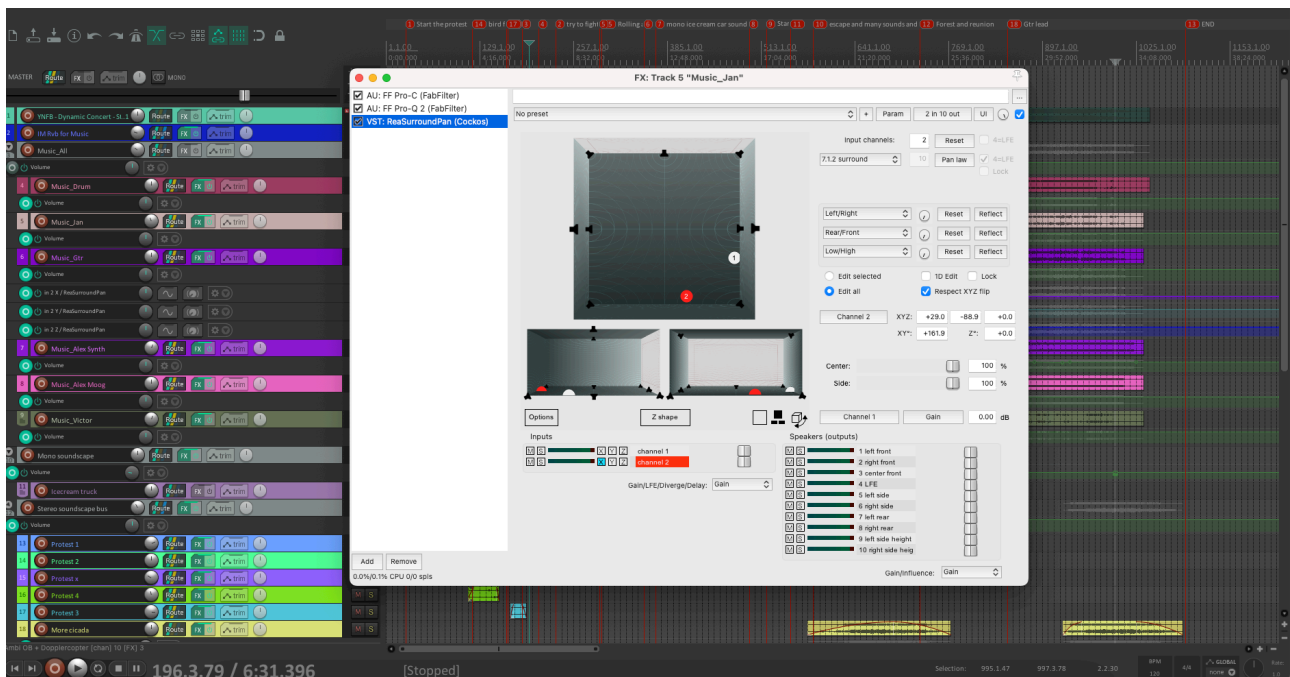
For the 2nd ambisonic recording, the A format was converted to B format by using the VVOctoEncode (1.0.3) plug-in which developed by Core Sound.

Then, the 2nd ambisonic recording in B format were decoded in order to adapt to the Dolby Atmos domain (7.1.2) by using SPARTA AmbiDEC and then route to the Dolby Atmos bed (Ch. 1-10)



For the mono and stereo field recording, dolby Atmos music panner was inserted in each track and route to the dolby Atmos renderer as an object, and then spatialise according to the artist's decision.

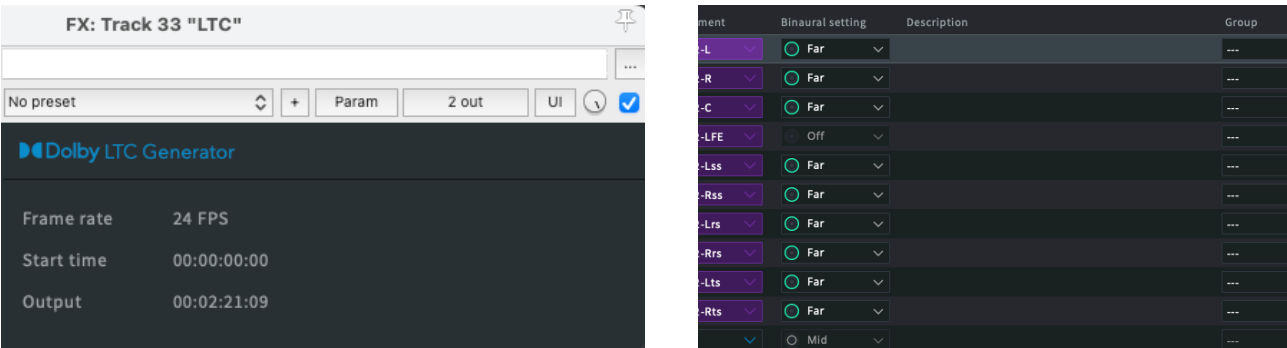




For the instrument tracks, the plug-in Cockos ReaSurroundPan was inserted in all the instrument and route to the dolby renderer beds (Ch1 - 10), and spatialise the instruments according to the position of the live recording session of the collective. At the same time, all the instruments tracks were sent to an Aux channel which SPARTA AmbiENC, Audiobrew AbVortex and AmbiDEC were inserted, and routed to the dolby atmos beds (Ch.1 - 10). The signal of these instrument tracks in stereo format were encoded to 2nd order ambisonic, and then processed by AbVortex the space designer plug-in which developed by Audiobrew (Artistic choice), and then decoded in order to adapt to the Dolby Atmos domain (7.1.2) by using SPARTA AmbiDEC.



For synchronising the dolby Atoms renderer and Reaper, a track is routed to the channel 130 of the Dolby Atmos renderer. Moreover, Dolby Atmos Binaural Setting plug-in was also inserted in the same track in order to have a better binaural set-up.



After finishing the production, an interview session will be carried out and the result will be analysed in order to investigate whether could the artist create an auditory cinematic experience for the audience and how the spatial elements are contributing to the music.

4 Interview session

4.1 Methodology

A qualitative interview session was held. A qualitative interview is a research method that involves conducting in-depth, open-ended interviews with individuals to gather information about their experiences, perspectives, and beliefs. It aims to explore complex phenomena and gain a deeper understanding of people's attitudes, motivations, and behaviours. (Döring, F., & Bortz, J. 2007)

In a qualitative interview, the researcher typically asks open-ended questions that allow the participants to elaborate on their thoughts and experiences in their own words. The interviewer may also probe deeper into certain topics or ask follow-up questions to gain a better understanding of the participant's perspective. Qualitative interviews can be conducted one-on-one or in a group setting, and they may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Structured interviews follow a predetermined set of questions, while semi-structured and unstructured interviews are concerned with more flexibility and spontaneity in the conversation. Overall, qualitative interviews are valuable for gaining insights into complex human experiences, attitudes, and behaviours. They can be used in a variety of fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and market research. Such features make it the perfect research tool to be used in my study.

Moreover, the questions of the interview were set to be semi-structured in order to allow more flexibility and spontaneity in the conversation. After the interview, the data will be summarised by Chatgpt, and I am the prompt designer to direct the whole summarised process. Chatgpt acts as an objective reference which assists me to have another angle for analysing the data and finding out the common points.

4.2 Implementation

A total of 15 individuals with diverse backgrounds, hailing from various locations including Hong Kong, Germany, and the UK, were invited to participate in the listening session. The subjects encompassed a range of profiles, including individuals without audio engineering or musical backgrounds, musicians, artists, film directors, philosophers, lawyer, audio specialists, sound engineers, and

students studying audio engineering.

The participants were instructed to engage with the composition in its entirety, which spans a duration of 35 minutes. To facilitate this, they were given the option to listen to the piece either through my personal devices with the aid of headphones or by utilising their IOS devices in conjunction with Apple AirPods Pro.

Guide for the listening session:

Step 1: Download the file through the link provided.

Step 2: Listening to the Atmos mix (MP4) on IOS using the Files application

Ensure you are using compatible headphones, e.g. AirPods Max or AirPods Pro.

Open the Files app and navigate to the saved location.

Tap on the file to start playback or tap on the ZIP file to unzip and then tap on the file to start playback.

Step 3: Either the spatial audio will be activated automatically, if not, activate the spatial audio functionality.

Step 4: You could choose “Fixed” in the control centre.

After the listening session, qualitative interview will be carried out such asking open-ended questions, and the questions are as follows:

Q1. What is your first impression of the music?

Q2. Please list 3 reasons/ 3 elements that you like and don't when you listen to the music.

Q3. Do you think you've experienced something different other than the music you listened to it before?

Q4. While listening, did you feel like ok?

Further questions might come up depending on the situation.

Afterwards, the results were summarised by Chatgpt according to my prompt design in order to find out a general overview of the common perspectives. It was done so in a bid to avoid subjective judgments of myself when handling the data, as not all interviewees expressed the same views on every aspect.

5 Results and discussion

5.1 General overview of the common perspectives of the interviewee

Prompt 1:

Here consists of the four interview questions for 15 interviewees and their feedback after listening to the composition. Please summarise the answers of the interviewee with regard to the questions (Q1,Q2,Q3,Q4 respectively).

Q1. What is your first impression of the music?

Q2. Please list 3 reasons/ 3 elements that you like and don't when you listen to the music.

Q3. Do you think you've experienced something different other than the music you listened to before?

Q4. While listening, did you feel like ok?

The answer of all the interviewees will be provided. Please wait a moment.

Prompt 2:

I will provide the answers of each interviewee in this format for example
Interviewee 1.

Q1.

Answer

Q2.

Answer

Q3.

Answer

Q4.

Answer

Prompt 3:

.....

The interview result in text form. (All the text are available in the Appendix)

Prompt 4:

I need an overall summarisation of all 15 interviewee with regard to the question 1,2,3,4.

Prompt 5:

Regenerate the response

After that, the overall summarisation is obtained, and **the outcome are as follows:**

With regard to question 1, the interviewees had mixed opinions regarding the composition. Some appreciated the storytelling aspect, smooth flow, and emotional impact, while others found certain sections disconnected or confusing. There were suggestions to merge the ending, provide more context, or incorporate opposing voices.

With regard to question 2, the majority of interviewees liked the immersive experience, three-dimensional sound, and blending of recordings and music. Some mentioned specific likes such as the choir of the protesting crowd, progression, or balanced mixing. Dislikes included peculiar drum sounds, looping sound bites, or limited effect of spatial audio, doesn't really immersive.

With regard to question 3, when asked if the composition felt different from other music, most interviewees mentioned that it did not feel significantly different. A few commented on the experimental elements or the romantic connection with the context.

With regard to question 4, overall, interviewees expressed that the composition felt okay or good. Some had concerns about potential legal issues when publishing the piece or found certain aspects uncomfortable or difficult to focus on.

5.2 Result analysis

The obtained data will be analysed from two perspectives in the following, so as to match the motivations and objectives of conducting these case studies and the interviews. In addition, it allows the artist to have a better understanding on how to improve and get inspired in doing future works.

1. Is it possible to shape the listener's experience like “playing the movie in their head and interacting with their own life experience” and create emotional impact?

2. How are the spatial elements contributing to my music substantially after understanding what listeners like and don't like?

During the process of analysis, the overall summarisation which is conducted by Chatgpt will be a reference as a starting point to analyse the data.

With regard to the first perspective, there is some insightful feedback. Firstly, one of the interviewees mentioned, '**Able to interact with their own life experience.** For example, the choir of people shouting in unison was incredibly powerful. It conveyed a sense of a large crowd with synchronised voices, which is not like the protests in Europe. However, I was curious about what they were protesting against and what the opposition to their cause was. It would be interesting to explore the other side of the conflict and provide some context. After the demonstration, when it fades away and the clarinet parts come in, there's a more relaxed flow. I imagined a whispering voice or a whistling voice that represents the other side of the protests. It could add a layer of complexity and challenge the listener's orientation. It could be like propaganda, a soft voice telling you what to do and think. This is just an idea to consider, as I felt that this part lost some of the tension and impact compared to the strong sections.' (Interviewee 1, Appendix). Even though this interviewee doesn't understand the language of the context in the field recording, the texture, context, and atmosphere of the field recording evoke his emotions, and he raised questions that are related to his own experience. At the same time, the composition creates an even stronger impact on some of the interviewees who understand the language of the field recording.

“I did feel a connection to the context due to the atmosphere and the immersive "scenes" created by the field recordings.” (Interviewee 14, Appendix)

The experience was highly emotional, perhaps influenced by the contextual elements. **It felt like watching a film**, with a strong narrative quality and a smooth progression that didn't give the impression of being improvised. (Interviewee 9, Appendix)

Apart from that, some of the interviewees do have an experience similar to "playing the movie in their head." Some of the interviewees think that the piece

flows seamlessly and organically, making it difficult to distinguish between the original sounds and the added elements, and it evoked personal experiences when listening to the piece.

Regarding the second perspective, in terms of duration, flow, and content of the piece, some interviewees mentioned that some parts of the field recording feel excessively repetitive. Some sounds were considered as technical flaws, and some of them mentioned that it's difficult to focus on the music as it's too long. However, this has instead become a distinctive aspect that sets it apart from other music, and some interviewees have even found themselves unknowingly listening to it for around 20 minutes. Keeping the "technical flaws" flaw a bit is part of the intention in order to maintain the organic sense of the recording. Therefore, considering the collective feedback, I believe that in future works, I would make the "technical flaws" even more obvious or get rid of them completely in order to deliver a clear intention, and the duration will be shortened to 10-15 minutes.

Regarding the flow and content, some of the interviewees mentioned that the flow is good and they feel comfortable (from the realistic layer to the conceptual layer). However, one interviewee mentioned that the "grammar" couldn't be figured out in the whole piece, but the music constantly motivated him to keep listening and caught his attention.

In terms of content, it reminds me of the situation at that time, but I can't figure out the 'grammar' here. Besides, when the full band appears, it sends shivers down my spine, creating an unexpected, romantic, and genuine emotional movement. In terms of creativity, the music consistently motivates me to keep listening and engages my attention." (Interviewee 14, Appendix)

This point is inspirational as it reveals how to actually catch the attention of the audience by swapping layers (from the field recording layer to the music layer), and the insight is that listeners seem inclined to search for an "anchor" while listening to the piece. In this case, the music layer acts as an anchor to keep the attention of the listeners so that they could also pay more attention to the field recording/observer layer when the focus shifts to these two layers, and this is the tension and release of this piece of composition.

Specifically for the ending, the interviewees have relatively strong and diverse opinions about this part. Interviewees who like and dislike it have distinctive opinions and feelings about this part. Moreover, they've mentioned how they feel, and they have their own interpretations of it.

The low-frequency drone at the end was particularly enjoyable, and perfectly describing the atmosphere, matching the overall tone of the composition. (Interviewee 7, Appendix)

In the last two minutes of the piece, I think it failed. It seems like the composer is uncertain about his direction and the intended message of the music. The lack of clarity leaves me questioning the purpose and intention behind these final moments. (Interviewee 14, Appendix)

The presence of cicadas evokes associations with summer, reflecting the context of Hong Kong where cicadas are commonly heard. It also symbolically relates to the implementation of the national security law during the summer season. However, towards the end, the cicada sounds disappear, marking the completion of the piece. (Interviewee 13, Appendix)

The insight here is that fewer elements and layers seem to trigger a stronger emotional response and interpretation from the listeners. For the ending, only two elements (a low-frequency drone and the field recording of cicadas) were used.

In terms of mixing, some interviewees thought that the balance between the music and field recording layers could be improved. In general, interviewees have diverse opinions about this, which is easy to understand as it is very subjective and depends on individual preferences.

Regarding the immersive experience, the opinions of the interviewees are quite diverse. Some of them mentioned that it sounds immersive when they activated the spatial audio functionality, while others did not. Considering the collective feedback, further research needs to be conducted specifically in the future to determine whether the spatial audio function enhances the immersive experience.

6 Conclusion

Artistic, technical constrain, and Insight for future works

Following the completion of the case study, there is a strong inclination to create the immersive experience which listener's the sensation of being surrounded by a completely other reality and the music composition could take over all of the attention and listeners' perceptual apparatuses, articulated by Murray (J. Murray. 1997) This desire stems from the belief that contemporary technology, and potentially future advancements, may enable the realisation of such an immersive experience, potentially ushering in a novel form of music. In pursuit of this objective, it is my intention to expand the repertoire of artwork, specifically employing the developed aural architecture, holds value in acquiring practical expertise. By generating more content in this format, opportunities arise to obtain diverse feedback from a broader audience. To enhance the impact, layer swapping should be executed with heightened emphasis, capturing attention and effectively conveying a distinct signal to the listeners. Additionally, for the "Observer" layer within the aural architecture, selecting various indoor spaces with distinct acoustic characteristics presents an avenue for experimentation beyond solely outdoor areas. Furthermore, in the mixing stage, regarding to the the limitation of the binaural Technology, it is noteworthy that the maturity of binaural technology may not currently facilitate a high-quality immersive experience for listeners. Acknowledging this limitation, the mixing process will be carried out also in the studio environment in the future as another reference to ensure accurate sound representation and effective sonic balance. Besides of that, sufficient time and budget is the key to enhance the quality of the composition and production processes, it is crucial to secure additional time and funding. For instance, seeking external funding sources and potential investors could provide support for future projects, ensuring enough resources for comprehensive exploration.

For the listening session guidance, should also allow head-tracking function, as it will enhance the localisation of the sound.

Evaluation of qualitative methodology for the case studies

When using qualitative methods for the first time, it requires a distinct cognitive process that differs from the approach used in quantitative methods. The existing literature provides theoretical foundations and research guidelines to assist in

navigating this process. However, practical experience plays a vital role in effectively implementing methods like unstructured and semi-structured interviews, as errors in methodology can compromise the validity of findings. It is important to note that the literature can only serve as a partial guide due to inherent limitations in comparing qualitative data obtained from diverse methods and subject areas.

Moreover, qualitative methodology demands significantly more effort from researchers compared to most quantitative methods, and this also applies to the participants or listeners involved. Consequently, recruiting test subjects becomes more challenging, especially in smaller studies that are constrained by factors such as time, space, and budget, which are often encountered in the context of a Master's thesis. Additionally, when designing test questions, it is crucial to consider the extensive time and resources required for transcribing, translating and analysing qualitative interviews. Furthermore, within the context of this case study, it is important to acknowledge that translation serves as a significant factor that could potentially affect the accuracy of the results. This is primarily due to the fact that certain interview sessions were conducted in Cantonese, necessitating the subsequent transcription and translation process. It is crucial to recognise that errors may arise during this process, introducing potential inaccuracies in the final analysis.

Qualitative methods have the advantage of operating without preconceived expectations inherent in quantitative survey methods. Hence, they are particularly suitable for exploring and evaluating one's own creative work, such as music or sound art, in a structured manner. These methods give rise to an approach that encompasses spatial music production as a cohesive entity, rather than isolating or fragmenting individual aspects. While qualitative methods are more challenging and subjective, they have the potential to yield generalisable findings. Additionally, in this case, the utilisation of ChatGPT from OpenAI for an overall summary serves as a point of reference, facilitating the analysis process and providing insights for future research.

Appendix

Interview result:

The result of the interview was being processed, rephrased without changing the context.

(1) Jakob FISHER

For Q1.

I felt that there was some kind of storytelling in your work. The mixture of recordings and the atmospheric sounds of Hong Kong, combined with the music played by you and your band, created a super organic piece. It felt cohesive and not like separate elements put together. I also sensed a narrative in it, although I understand that the story may be interpreted differently by the writer and the reader. Personally, I found it very impressive.

I do have a few questions and some suggestions for potential changes, if you're open to them. I didn't fully understand or connect with the ending part of the piece. After the cicadas, there was another section that felt like a jump into a more technical, synthetic, and experimental world. It seemed disconnected from the rest in terms of mixing and storytelling. I had a hard time following the narrative I had created in my mind. Perhaps merging the very end with the moment when the cicadas come in could create a more cohesive ending. However, I understand that this is a significant decision to make, and it depends on your artistic vision.

I generally prefer shorter pieces that require concentrated listening, so my opinion is subjective. I acknowledge that the last part holds its own meaning and importance, especially with the emphasis on sound design and experimental music experiences. With surround and 3D sound, it could potentially enhance the overall experience. However, personally, I felt that I lost the narrative in that final part.

I noticed some sudden pops in the recordings, and I wasn't sure if it was an intentional stylistic choice or an accident. In some parts, the piece flowed seamlessly and organically, making it difficult to distinguish between original sounds and added elements. However, there were moments where something different stood out, and it made me wonder about the intention behind it.

The piece felt like a film. I could visualise the scenes and the intensity of the protest. It was captivating to be part of it and then escape. That part of the story was transported perfectly, and the message was clear.

However, I found it interesting to consider incorporating the opposing voice or perspective. While I understand the context of Chinese oppression, it didn't feel present in the story. Adding a bit of room for the opposing viewpoint could create more depth and balance.

The choir of people shouting in unison was incredibly powerful. It conveyed a sense of a large crowd with synchronised voices. However, I was curious about what they were protesting against and what the opposition to their cause was. It would be interesting to explore the other side of the conflict and provide some context.

After the demonstration, when it fades away and the clarinet parts come in, there's a more relaxed flow. I imagined a whispering voice or a whistling voice that represents the other side of the protests. It could add a layer of complexity and challenge the listener's orientation. It could be like propaganda, a soft voice telling you what to do and think. This is just an idea to consider, as I felt that this part lost some of the tension and impact compared to the strong sections.

For Q2.

Like:

I really appreciate the organic mixture of fused recordings and music in your piece. It feels like a cohesive and tightly woven work, as if it's one seamless piece. I was genuinely impressed by the choir of the protesting crowd. It serves as a powerful document capturing the way people express their protests. The blend of documentation and art fits perfectly here. Another aspect I enjoyed is the transition from the urban context to the natural sounds, where I could hear faint family noises, including a child, and the soothing sound of cicadas. It creates an idyllic atmosphere that adds a beautiful touch to the overall composition. These are the three main aspects that stood out to me.

Dislike:

The solo guitar in the middle part, around the time code 12:00, didn't resonate with me entirely. I felt that it didn't quite align with the overall composition and left me slightly disconnected.

Towards the end, I found myself getting a bit lost. The final minutes felt a little too prolonged for my personal taste, and I struggled to maintain a strong connection to the piece during that time.

At the very beginning, there was a noise that resembled wind in the microphone. It served as a stumbling moment for me, as it momentarily disrupted the initial immersion and engagement with the piece.

For Q3. Yes, definitely.

For Q4. No comments.

(2) Ahlai CHOW:

For Q1.

The track evoked a strong emotional response in me, leading to a sense of sadness and even tears. It transported me back to a protest scene from four years ago, immersing me fully in the moment. The level of detail and the multitude of fragments in the composition created an atmosphere akin to that of a movie or a video game. The music enhanced this experience and added a sense of flow throughout.

Throughout the listening process, I couldn't shake the feeling of being devoid of any freedom. This sentiment persisted until the end, where the absence of a sense of "Home" further intensified this impression.

For Q2:

Like:

1. The structure is clear
2. Sounds three-dimensional
3. Good experience with the head-track mode being turned on.

Dislike:

1. Drum sounds weird, maybe it's better with electronic drum
2. The mixing is not good enough

For Q3. Not so much different to the other music.

For Q4. Feel okay, and sounds so organic and natural at the end. Beside, I am afraid you will break the law of Hong Kong when you publish the piece.

(3) Wa Yuen

For Q1.

Section 1

"Street Protest Field Recording

The music has an energetic tone, with elements of wildness and a sense of fantasy.

Section 2 [8:45-23:25]:

The music takes on a strange and bewildering quality.

The street sounds become static, lacking the directional nature of a social movement or protest.

Section 3 [23:25-]:

The environmental sounds become abstract and fade away.

The cicada sounds, combined with the music, create a sense of openness and relaxation.

Starting at 33:20, the low-frequency tones construct a misty and dreamlike atmosphere.

Overall Feedback:

The balance between the ambience and music maintains a consistent foreground-background relationship and proportion. Is this intentional?

Most of the time, the music feels like background music. Is this your storytelling intention?

Regarding Dolby Atmos, there are some peculiarities in terms of head movement versus panning. In some instances, it feels odd. The spatial audio panning of the cicadas in the ending section is normal. However, in Section 1, the panning of the protest sounds is abnormal. When I turn my head to the left, the sound also pans to the left, and the extent of panning is greater than the movement of my head. (Is this a design choice or an error?)

The application of Dolby Atmos doesn't seem to have a significant effect.

Overall, the experience evokes an imagination of observing or dreaming about protests.

There is a sense of detachment and confusion.

For Q2.

Like

- The Progression (from concrete to abstract).
- The sense of emptiness in the music elements is captivating.

Dislike

- The looping of the sound bite (in terms of composition).
- The relationship between field recordings and music.
- It seems that the application of Dolby Atmos doesn't have a significant effect.

For Q3. Not so very much difference.

For Q4. Feels like normal.

(4) Elson TONG

For Q1.

The experience evokes a mix of emotions—being deeply moved, feeling uneasy, and stimulated by the dissonance. As the journey progresses, I walked beside the trees where overwhelming emotions take hold, leading to tears.

For Q2.

Like

- The piece evokes a sense of being touched or moved emotionally.
- It feels like there are three distinct movements within the composition.
- There is a healing quality to the music, and the instrumentation is under controlled. It leaves me curious about what lies ahead in the future.

Dislike

In the middle movement, I'm unsure about the purpose of the sound effects and how they contribute to the overall composition.

For Q3. It's a new experience for me. It's like an audio art piece played in the gallery.

For Q4. Feel okay

(5) Tomii CHAN

For Q1.

I feel like with spatial audio on it's much louder, is a level match possible for an audience to do comparisons easier?

Besides, snare can be mixed more upfront I think and hi-hat louder.

It feels more encircling with spatial audio on, like it's thicker.

Is the flow of the first half of the piece following the sequence of what might have happened on a protest day?

I like the cicada segment of the song a lot, great buildup and release.

For Q2.

Like:

Music and mixing well balanced

Strong visual effect

Dislike:

Drum could be more upfront

For Q4. The piece is overall very good and comfortable, effectively stirring up emotions within the listener. The section with the cicada sounds is particularly interesting and experimental, combining elements of ambiance, jazz, and experimentation. It's difficult to categorise or define this particular part, as it stands out as a unique piece within the composition.

(6) Sean

For Q1.

The composition forms a cohesive whole, not divided into distinct movements like a symphonic poem. It starts off with a strong sense of realism and gradually transitions into more abstract elements.

For Q2.

The piece incorporates experimental elements without going overboard. It allows for visualizations of realistic scenes, creating a comfortable and immersive experience for the listener.

For Q3.

New experience, feel so different when I turned off the spatial audio function.

For Q4.

Feels okay.

(7) Cyris Kong

For Q1.

The piece was unexpected in terms of its contents, featuring many dialogues and a stronger focus on realism. Additionally, the low-frequency drone at the end was particularly enjoyable, reminiscent of the weather and perfectly describing the atmosphere, matching the overall tone of the composition. I'm curious about the mixing choices—why was it done in such a manner? It left me unsure of the intended message, adding a sense of ambiguity. Overall, it evoked a feeling of shock and was emotionally touching.

For Q2:

Like:

In general, it sounds immersive. Also, the ending sounds good for me with the low frequency drone.

Dislike:

From my point of view, I don't like the slogan, and the piece is too long and I couldn't focus.

For Q3.

The form of this piece is distinct from other music productions. It doesn't resemble a standalone single or something one would typically listen to in a streaming performance. Rather, it has a quality akin to a live performance or storytelling. I have visual elements in mind that are connected to my personal experiences with social movements. What's most important to me is that the background or the context in which I find myself resonates with the music. This resonance creates a romantic connection, allowing me to engage with the scenes portrayed by the music. I'm curious about the creative process behind this composition and how it came to be.

For Q4.

Feel like okay, with turning on the spatial audio function (head tracking mode), seems like I am in the scene and sounds more immersive.

(8) Victor SUM

For Q1.

The composition flows smoothly, offering a silky and uninterrupted experience without any abrupt or violent elements. The first part focuses on the theme of social movement, creating an atmosphere that seems to avoid intentionally provoking specific emotions. However, the intention behind incorporating certain sounds into the piece remains unclear. The inclusion of pedestrian sounds, cicadas, and nostalgic elements adds depth and evokes a sense of familiarity. The seamless mixing of sounds creates a captivating auditory experience, subtly drawing the listener in for an immersive 20-minute journey akin to walking on a sonic carpet.

For Q2.

Like:

The music evokes a subtle emotional response, neither too warm nor too cold, avoiding the feeling of being confined to a hearth.

The composition achieves a well-balanced blend of music and sounds, allowing them to complement each other harmoniously.

The sounds maintain a neutral stance (the political part), neither favouring nor opposing any particular direction or narrative.

Dislike:

The positioning of the field recording is uncertain, as it seems to capture the second-order elements, making it difficult to discern the second-order function when listening to it.

For Q3.

No.

For Q4.

Feel like okay, normal.

(9) James CHEUNG:

For Q1.

The experience was highly emotional, perhaps influenced by the contextual elements. It felt akin to watching a film, with a strong narrative quality and a smooth progression that didn't give the impression of being improvised. Initially, it had a documentary-like atmosphere, but then it delved into personal and fictional stories. I sensed significant growth and transcendence in YNFB's work, likely due to my familiarity with you and your collective.

For Q2.

Like:

The composition resembles the narrative structure of a film, effectively weaving a story. The incorporation of field recordings enhances the immersion, drawing me deeper into the context of the piece. The harmonies are well executed, contributing to the overall quality. The open-ended conclusion adds a compelling element, leaving room for interpretation and contemplation.

Dislike:

In the middle section, I noticed a repetitive chord progression that led to a loss of my attention. It would have been beneficial to incorporate more field recordings during this part as well as towards the ending, in order to enhance the overall texture and variety of the composition.

For Q3.

Yes, there are noticeable differences in this composition. It carries distinct characteristics which reminds me of Yat-Fung WONG, Benjamin's style.

The duration and form of the piece deviate from the usual norms observed in non-classical music. Despite this, I found myself able to remain attentive and fully engaged in listening to the music for approximately 90% of the duration.

For Q4.

The overall experience was satisfactory, with notable emotional fluctuations throughout the piece. Towards the end, there was a sense of relieved and release. However, the initial stages of the composition left me feeling uneasy due to the contextual elements involved.

(10) Scott HO:

For Q1.

The piece consists of four to five distinct parts that evoke different emotions and atmospheres.

In the first part, there is an intense, nervous, noisy, and chaotic energy present.

The second part takes on a somber tone, conveying a sense of sadness and feeling lost. It portrays the fatigue of the heart, walking alone on the street, engaging in activities such as drug use and injections. The sounds of lighters and careful observation add to the atmosphere.

As the composition progresses to the third part, it gradually enters a more pleasant and positive state. There is a balanced and energetic quality, accompanied by the soothing sound of cicadas, creating a comfortable ambiance.

The fourth part brings a sense of cooling down and calming down, offering a moment of respite.

In the fifth part, the sounds take on an alarm-like quality, signalling the need to wake up and question whether it was all just a dream. It urges one to get up and move forward. Water sounds, the presence of a boat, and engine sounds evoke associations. A low-frequency drone and an intense alarm siren heighten the intensity of this section.

For Q2.

Like:

The music creates a chilled atmosphere while incorporating chaotic soundscapes, resulting in an intriguing composition.

Listening to this piece triggers vivid visualisations, allowing the mind to imagine various scenes. It has a cinematic quality, reminiscent of moments like finding oneself in a lost place or experiencing a calm after being emotionally wounded. It feels like being immersed in a dream-like state.

Furthermore, this composition prompts introspection, provoking deep thoughts and reflections within oneself.

Dislike:

No.

For Q3.

This composition offers a multitude of unique elements that sets it apart. It resembles storytelling, with a lengthy duration that allows the listener to envision

vivid scenes and make associations with visuals. Notably, the absence of vocals gives it a distinct theme and allows for a different kind of exploration.

The inclusion of special sound effects adds a particularity to the piece, evoking various sensations and possibly even invoking thoughts related to drugs (metaphorically or symbolically).

For Q4.

Okay. Feels inspiring.

(11) YAN

For Q1.

I felt a sense of nervousness while listening to the piece, and the field recordings created a familiar and realistic atmosphere, as if I was experiencing a real situation. There was a tinge of sadness due to the limitations imposed by the political system. Suddenly, the absence of people transitioned into a more natural setting. It made me reflect on how such circumstances can dull one's senses and leave a feeling of helplessness. Perhaps it is a call to transform ourselves and find meaning in a larger natural order, to reconnect with our core essence and the essence of life itself. The context of the piece is crucial in understanding its significance and impact.

For Q2.

Likes:

I appreciate the sense of connection to nature in the piece. Initially the piece evokes a feeling of helplessness and sadness. Then, as the composition progresses, it gradually becomes more comforting and soothing.

Dislikes:

Nothing

For Q3.

Yes, there are some difference. The piece stands out due to its unique qualities and long duration. It immediately evokes a strong emotional response within me, likely because of my personal experiences. While I don't typically have a strong

emotional connection to music, I find that words resonate with me more easily, allowing me to immerse myself in the emotions conveyed.

For Q4.

Okay, feels normal.

(12) Chris FONG

For Q1.

The entire piece sounds beautiful, reminiscent of a symphony or jazz music, such as Pat Metheny's compositions. It has a clear structure, and the narrative takes unexpected twists and turns. In terms of the mixing, I anticipated more prominent elements of "Music" (indicating a desire for a louder musical layer). As for the ending, it leaves me with a lingering question that sparks curiosity.

For Q2.

Like:

- The flow of the music is excellent, exhibiting a seamless progression that captivates the listener.
- The content of the piece is abundant, offering a wealth of musical ideas, themes, and motifs.
- The instrumentation employed is commendable, showcasing skillful selection and arrangement of instruments to create a pleasing sonic palette.

Dislike:

- Mixing for example the balance between music and the field recording.
- While the composition as a whole is commendable, there are certain parts that could benefit from a stronger impact or presence, perhaps through heightened dynamics or more pronounced musical elements.

For Q3.

This composition offers a distinct and unique perspective that encourages me to explore the music from a different angle, thanks to the incorporation of layered field recordings. It adds a new dimension to my understanding and appreciation of the piece.

For Q4.

Very OK emotionally.

(13) Cypher WONG

For Q1.

The overall tone of the piece is not particularly positive, giving the impression that the composer is highly agitated due to the choice of instrumentation and sounds. The beginning evokes a sense of anger, which gradually subsides throughout the piece. However, by the end, there is a feeling of emptiness, as if all the efforts have yielded nothing substantial, leaving only the sound of cicadas as a lingering presence.

For Q2.

Like:

The use of spatial audio enhances the realism and immerses the listener, creating a vivid experience that lingers in the mind.

The rhythm, sections, and overall structure are well-balanced, resembling the experience of reading a book. The elements are distributed effectively, allowing for a smooth flow when listening.

Metaphorical elements are present, particularly with the inclusion of cicada field recordings. The presence of cicadas evokes associations with summer, reflecting the context of Hong Kong where cicadas are commonly heard. It also symbolically relates to the implementation of the national security law during the summer season. However, towards the end, the cicada sounds disappear, marking the completion of the piece.

Dislike:

There is nothing particularly disliked about it.

It doesn't evoke strong enough emotions in me for some parts of the music.

Some parts of the field recording feel excessively repetitive.

For Q3:

There are notable differences in this piece. It's a unique combination of field recordings and music, creating an immersive experience that transports the listener to different environments. The instrumentation is quite distinctive, incorporating elements like shouting and sound effects. It could be attributed to my usual preference for pop music where the focus is on melody and rhythm, making this piece stand out and breaking away from the usual listening experience.

For Q4:

I feel quite satisfied with the overall experience. It's immersive and captivating. It's like reading a short book that resonates with my personal emotions and then passing it on to you to read.

(14) 馬仔 Ronley MA

For Q1.

Before sharing my first impression. There are two perspective, first of all, from my point of view.

Secondly, from the point of view of the composer and which is not related to me.

First and foremost, I don't get a strong sense of spatial audio or an immersive experience from the piece. It feels more like stereo tracks to me rather than a fully realised spatial sound environment. However, despite this, the composition itself sounds complete, and I don't have any difficulty listening to the piece in its entirety.

In terms of content, it reminds me of the situation at that time, but I can't figure out the "grammar" here. Besides, when the full band appears, it sends shivers down my spine, creating an unexpected, romantic, and genuine emotional movement. In terms of creativity, the music consistently motivates me to keep listening and engages my attention.

At 00:19, I perceive it as a scene change where the music I'm hearing for the first time has a completely different mixing style. It piques my curiosity and makes me refrain from passing judgment on the piece until I understand the significance of this scene change. It intrigues me and urges me to continue listening attentively.

At 00:25, another scene change occurs, but I find it lacking in energy. The field recordings seem unusual and don't adhere to what I perceive as a cohesive structure or "grammar." As a result, I struggle to make sense of this particular section.

In the last two minutes of the piece, I think it's fail. It seems like the composer is uncertain about his direction and the intended message of the music. The lack of clarity leaves me questioning the purpose and intention behind these final moments.

For Q2.

Like:

A good attempt here seems to be creating a complete sound story, aiming to engage the listener in a narrative experience through the use of sound. Also,

It is enjoyable to listen to and evokes emotional responses, stirring something within the listener.

Dislike:

I think it's important to evaluate the motivation behind it, sound art is employed as a means of storytelling, showcasing creative ideas. It's important to observe how people engage and share their thoughts, seeking feedback and a sense of connection. Appreciating it doesn't necessarily require technical expertise; it's not about analysing it from a technical standpoint. Given these reasons, there isn't anything to dislike about it.

For Q3.

The composition consists of various references rather than introducing new styles. This is because I myself listen to sound art and engage in its creation as well.

For Q4.

In terms of content, it was satisfactory but nothing particularly outstanding. However, I did feel a connection to the context due to the atmosphere and the immersive "scenes" created by the field recordings. Apart from that, I felt emotionally okay.

(15) Ray Chan

For Q1.

During the listening process, I didn't feel like it lasted for over 30 minutes. It was an enjoyable experience rather than merely entertainment. It evoked thoughts of summer, perhaps because I had left Hong Kong before winter, so the sense of empathy remained tied to summer. It made me feel a sense of restlessness, not in an uneasy way, but rather a restlessness that made me want to sit down and observe, similar to watching a fireworks display and wanting to find a spot to sit and observe. Additionally, I sensed a slight feeling of unease. As the composition progressed, I actually forgot about the street sounds from the first part because the melodies in the middle section were captivating. I perceived a certain traditional quality with a well-structured narrative arc. The last part felt like the ending of a story.

For Q2.

Like:

I think it's a good thing to start with the sound effects related to the Hong Kong anti-extradition movement, as it effectively characterises the nature of the music.

However, using such elements only at the beginning may cause them to be forgotten later on, lacking a sense of coherence throughout. It doesn't further enhance the emotions associated with street protests. I like the ups and downs within the piece, and the calm ending leaves me with a comfortable and satisfying overall listening experience.

Dislike:

Using such elements like the sounds effects related to the Hong Kong anti-extradition movement only at the beginning may cause them to be forgotten later on, lacking a sense of coherence throughout. It doesn't further enhance the emotions associated with street protests.

For Q3.

I feel that there isn't, because when I listen to the music, it evokes a prolonged emotional transformation rather than a specific event. It's challenging to find something similar in that regard.

For Q4.

I think it's okay. However, I'm wondering if the overall experience might be too comfortable. While I find it comfortable, comfort may not necessarily be a good thing. Is there a possibility in the next work to discover that slight discomfort, to make the emotions more complex or memorable?

7 Reference

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